

[9 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) to (d) A total of 452 kms and 1048 kms International Border with Pakistan has been fenced in Punjab and Rajasthan sectors respectively. Certain unfeasible riverine and shifting sand dune areas in Punjab and Rajasthan respectively have been left unfenced.

Government have approved a proposal for construction of fencing on raised embankments in 310 kms of Rann of Kutch area in Gujarat sector. Work in 10 kms stretch has already been completed and entire project is expected to be completed in five years' time. Further, it has been decided to undertake fencing/flood lighting along the 180 kms of Jammu International Border and provision of electronic surveillance equipment in sensitive stretches. This project is expected to be completed in about one and a half year's time.

Greater Autonomy for the States

1931. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and some other prominent leaders have recently asked for greater autonomy of the States to bring normalcy there;

(b) whether Government are against greater autonomy;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the advantages and disadvantages of the greater autonomy; and

(e) whether greater autonomy is being considered with some conditions, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) to (e) Voices have been raised both in favour and against the grant of autonomy to J and K. The Government is of firm conviction that national integration and devolution of powers to States must go together and committed to continuing its endeavour to evolve a broad consensus on the implementation of steps for wide ranging devolution

of powers to the States that leads to efficiency in administration, acceleration in development and fullest realization of the creative potential of all sections of our people.

Additional Companies of BSF for Tripura

1932. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the length of the International Border between Tripura and Bangladesh;

(b) what is the strength of Border Security Force that has been deployed in Tripura to guard the border;

(c) whether the strength is adequate to guard the border effectively;

(d) whether Government of Tripura has made any request to deploy additional companies of BSF in the State; and

(e) if so, what steps have been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Length of International border between Tripura and Bangladesh is 856 kilometers.

(b) and (c) At present, against a total authorisation of 10 Battalions, 8 Battalions are deployed on the Tripura border.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Two additional Battalions of BSF have been sanctioned for deployment on the Tripura border.